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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002730

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SUBJECT: BIO INFO ON IRAQI AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO SAUDI
ARABIA GHANIM AL-JUMAILY

REF: BAGHDAD 3148

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Iraqi Ambassador-designate to Saudi Arabia Dr. Ghanim Alwan Al-Jumaily currently serves as Iraq's Ambassador in Tokyo, where he is a well-known and close Embassy contact. To correct reftel, which indicates Jumaily is a career diplomat who served in the Saddam era, in fact Jumaily is an American citizen physicist with a specialization in optics who has lived in the United States since the early 1980's, and whose first diplomatic assignment was his posting to Tokyo. Some internet postings assert he was or is pro-Saddam and that a humanitarian organization he led was a front for militant Islamic activities. We have found him to be an able and effective Ambassador. END SUMMARY.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

[1](#)2. (C) According to his official resume, Jumaily was born in Iraq in 1950. He earned a bachelors degree in physics at the University of Baghdad in 1974 and was subsequently awarded a government scholarship to attend graduate school in the United States. He received a masters degree in optics from the University of Arizona at Tucson in 1983 and a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque in 1987.

[1](#)3. (C) From 1987 until 1991 Jumaily worked as a manager for research and development at Barr Associates in Westford, Massachusetts. Between 1991 and 1996 he was a member of the technical staff at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, where he was a member of the optics team for the Mars Pathfinder and Cassini Saturn missions. Jumaily then moved briefly to New Jersey in 1996 where he worked for less than a year as a manager at the Thin Film Department of INRAD Corporation in Northvale. He then relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota where he worked from 1996 until 2000 as a manager of Seagate Technologies Metrology Group, Recording Head Operations. In 2000 he was hired as a lead engineer for Nanovation Technologies, an optical communications startup based in Northville, Michigan, where he stayed until 2001.

[1](#)4. (C) In 2001 Jumaily shifted gears away from the scientific field to become Chief Executive Officer of Life for Relief and Development, an international non-governmental organization based in Michigan, which provides relief and

assistance to Iraqis. It also, according to its web site, has projects in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, and Sierra Leone. (NOTE: The web site says it was founded in 1992 by Iraqi-American professionals concerned about the situation in Iraq. Jumaily reportedly began volunteering with the organization at that point, indicating that perhaps he was a founding member. A number of internet entries assert the group is tied to either Saddam Hussain, Al-Qaeda, HAMAS, or other militant Islamic groups, and some accuse Jumaily of being a member or leader of one or more of these organizations. According to one press report, he was present in Iraq in 2004 when U.S. Army units conducted a "cordon and search" operation of the group's office in Baghdad and seized computers. He apparently was not detained and returned to the United States the following day. According to the article, Life for Relief and Development had been working in Iraq since 1993, and although trying to keep its distance from Saddam, was openly critical of U.S. policy in Iraq. END NOTE.)

15. (C) Jumaily holds two patents in the area of optical communications and a NASA Certificate of Recognition for his contribution to the Mars-Pathfinder mission, and has also authored over thirty technical papers and edited two books on optical metrology.

AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO

16. (C) Jumaily became Iraq's Ambassador to Japan on July 4, 2004. He claimed to be surprised by the appointment, not knowing of it until after it was approved by the Iraqi Prime Minister. According to Jumaily, a friend of his was associated with the Interim Government and submitted his name as a possible Ambassador without his knowledge. In Tokyo, Jumaily has been an active and effective Ambassador. U.S. Embassy Tokyo has maintained close contacts with him, and he has cultivated a wide range of governmental, parliamentary, and media contacts which he seems to utilize well to promote Iraq's interests. He's promoted and hosted visits to Tokyo by Prime Minister Maliki, Vice President Hashimi, National Security Advisor Rubaie, and a number of other parliamentary and governmental delegations. His overriding priority is to keep Japan engaged with Iraq. While he has striven to keep Japan's Self Defense Forces involved, he recognizes Japan's military limitations and sets a higher priority on attracting Japanese investment and commercial interest. He'd like to see Japan play a leading role in Iraq's oil sector and is anxious also for technology transfers that will help Iraq to advance.

17. (C) Jumaily has hinted to us for some time of his possible appointment to Riyadh, and has often expressed to us his frustration with the slow-moving and uncoordinated nature of his ministry and the Iraqi government. When we called to congratulate him on his appointment he told us that while he had seen the press reports concerning his onward assignment, he still has yet to hear anything about it from his own ministry. He is also not comfortable with the fact that the announcement of his appointment was made public prior to informing the Saudi government or receiving agreement. With regard to whether his appointment requires Council of Representative approval, he said he is unsure, but that Foreign Minister Zebari has been attempting all along to set up these appointments so they do not require parliamentary confirmation. He said that if CoR approval is needed, he will be in Tokyo for "a long, long time." He is clearly anxious to take up his post in Riyadh and fully recognizes the critical importance of improving Iraqi-Saudi relations.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

18. (C) Jumaily is a practicing Sunni who does not drink. His

wife, Widad Slah, and his daughters wear headscarves at all times in public. His oldest daughter, Mariam, is attending law school in Texas at Southern Methodist University, while his second daughter, Youssra, is a student at Sofia University in Tokyo. He also has a high-school age son, Omar, and a younger son, Anas, with him in Japan. According to Jumaily's resume his hobbies are reading history and classics, and for physical activities he prefers basketball and walking. He speaks English fluently and is a pleasant and engaging conversationalist.

SCHIEFFER